

Legislative Updates

Health Insurance for Poor Children

Congress recently voted to reauthorize the State Children's Health Insurance Program (SCHIP), known as "Healthy Families" in California. While I supported the creation of SCHIP in 1997 and continue to support extending the program today, the bill passed by Congress fails to target assistance to the neediest children. The bill would expand the scope of SCHIP to pay for health care for children in families making more than \$60,000 a year. Yet, even as Congress debates allowing wealthier families to receive SCHIP benefits, more than 800,000 children from low-income families in California have no health insurance. These children should be our primary focus.

Under the SCHIP legislation passed by Congress, states have free rein to expand this government health care program to the middle class, without any requirement to cover the truly poor children first. The bill also would make it easier for non-citizens and illegal aliens to fraudulently obtain Medi-Cal benefits. I believe health coverage for children is an important national priority, but this bill is the wrong approach. As an alternative, I support a bill to extend SCHIP for 18 months and provide states with additional funding to cover shortfalls while Congress works on a long-term solution that truly addresses the needs of low-income children.

[Read more](#)

Small Business Health Care Tax Relief

I recently joined Rep. Ron Kind (D-WI) in introducing [legislation](#) that would help expand health coverage to millions of currently uninsured American taxpayers, and make coverage more affordable to many more who already have some level of insurance. This measure would eliminate an inequity in the tax code that currently requires millions of self-employed individuals to pay additional payroll taxes on the cost of their health insurance. With nearly 21 million sole-proprietor small businesses in the U.S., this important tax relief could benefit nearly three million such small and micro-business owners in California alone. For more information on this important bipartisan effort,

[click here](#)

[click here](#)

General Petraeus Discusses in Iraq

In early September, General David Petraeus and Ambassador Ryan Crocker provided a comprehensive and straightforward description of the situation in Iraq. General Petraeus [indicated](#)

that we've seen considerable progress in improving security in Iraq. He pointed out that al Qaeda in Iraq is now "off balance" and is steadily running out of friends in Iraq. He also indicated that

[sectarian violence in Baghdad is down considerably](#)

. Based largely on these security improvements, General Petraeus recommended that U.S. troops could return to their pre-surge level mid next year.

General Petraeus and Ambassador Crocker also discussed continuing challenges in Iraq. The General pronounced that Iranian Special Forces are fighting a 'proxy war' against U.S. troops and are training Iraqi Shiite extremists. He also observed that violence in Iraq remains too high. Further, Ambassador Crocker provided an honest [assessment](#) about the difficulty in passing key legislation aimed at reconciling the Iraqi people. I believe Prime Minister Maliki's government must represent all Iraqis and redouble their efforts to push reconciliation legislation forward.

Both leaders indicated their belief that success in Iraq is possible, and pointed out that al Qaeda and Iran would both benefit from an American defeat there. They made it clear that the mission in Iraq is critical to our national security. I will continue to work to ensure that our troops have the resources they need to succeed, and deeply hope that the progress we've seen in recent months continues so we will be able to begin bringing them home soon. [Read more](#)

Pending Legislation and Issues Important to Northern CA

Suicide Prevention Bill Gains Support

Earlier this year, I introduced [legislation](#) aimed at punishing those who prey on vulnerable individuals by promoting suicide. The measure came about after a Northern California resident, Suzanne Gonzales of Red Bluff, took her life after falling victim to an online discussion group that promotes suicide. Several months ago, Rep. Jim Matheson (D-UT) agreed to take a leadership role in supporting this bill, making the effort bipartisan. Since then, two other representatives have become cosponsors of H.R. 940.

Additionally, Suzy's parents, Mike and Mary Gonzales, have been working tirelessly to build support and raise awareness of this tragedy. It is vitally important for parents, teachers, and counselors to be aware of the threats posed by suicide promotion websites so they can guard young people from these dangerous influences. [Share your thoughts](#)

Veterans Bill Unnecessarily Delayed

Earlier this year, I was proud to support legislation providing a substantial increase in funding for veterans' health care and other benefits. The Military Construction and Veterans Affairs Appropriations Act for fiscal year 2008 passed with overwhelming bipartisan support in both the House and Senate. However, this bill, which provides much-needed funding for construction and maintenance of veterans' medical facilities and research and treatment of conditions such as post traumatic stress disorder and traumatic brain injury, has not yet been presented to the President for his signature.

Last week, I joined a number of my colleagues in the House of Representatives in sending a [letter](#) to Senate Majority Leader Harry Reid, urging him to keep the Senate in session until this vital legislation is completed. Unfortunately, based on published media reports, it appears that some in Congress are using passage of the Veterans' appropriations bill as a bargaining chip to extract concessions from the President on other spending measures. The needs of our veterans are too important to be used for such political posturing. The Veterans' appropriations bill must not be delayed any longer.

Improving Immigration Enforcement

I strongly believe our nation must do a better job in enforcing immigration laws. One major weakness is the lack of information sharing between local law enforcement officials and the federal agencies charged with enforcing our laws. To help address this problem, I recently became an original cosponsor of the [CLEAR Act](#), which would clarify that local and state law enforcement agencies have the inherent authority to detain criminal and illegal aliens within the course of their regular duty. It would also create a new category in the National Crime Information Center (NCIC) for any violator of immigration law with the goal that the information will be readily accessible to every local police officer. And it would provide local governments that assist in the enforcement immigration laws with additional resources, including access to State Criminal Alien Assistance Program (SCAAP) funding.

Many provisions in the CLEAR Act were included in legislation that passed the House with a strong bipartisan majority in 2006. Unfortunately, these immigration enforcement bills were never considered by the Senate. I will continue to push for consideration of this common sense legislation so that law enforcement has the tools and resources they need to enforce the law and apprehend illegal immigrants who commit crimes. [Share your thoughts](#)

Radical Iranian President Visits U.S.

Iranian President Mahmoud Ahmadinejad recently spoke at Columbia University and the United Nations, which is headquartered in New York City. His outlandish comments and anti-American rhetoric in the U.S. only further demonstrated his extremism. But more than just tossing around inflammatory words, Ahmadinejad and the theocratic leaders of Iran represent a growing threat to our national security and regional stability. Iran is clearly working to defeat the United States in Iraq and to expand their influence in the Middle East. This reality, coupled with their pursuit of nuclear weapons, demonstrates why the international community must respond effectively to Ahmadinejad's continued defiance.

I recently voted in favor of [legislation](#) that would strengthen U.S. sanctions aimed at reducing financial support that bolsters Iran's nuclear program. But unilateral sanctions alone may not be sufficient in encouraging Iran to stop their pursuit of nuclear weapons. I believe we will need a united international effort and stronger action by the United Nations to effectively address Iran's defiant behavior. Further, I believe every option for dealing with this serious threat needs to be

on the table. In the coming weeks, I hope that Russia and China and our European allies will join our nation in supporting a new United Nations resolution that would establish strong multilateral sanctions against this dangerous regime. Such strong action could convince Iran to change course and stop ignoring the demands of the international community.

District News

General Stresses Cyber Security at Beale



I recently had the opportunity to join California's senators in [welcoming](#) Lt. Gen. Robert Elder to Beale AFB. General Elder is commander of the Air Force's Cyberspace, Global Strike and Network Operations command. In this capacity, he is leading the effort to develop the new Cyber Command for the Air Force. The Air Force created this command after concluding that the "cyber domain" will soon become as important a "battlefield" as air and space. Cyber threats against our nation could include disrupting computer systems, blocking communications, disabling energy grids, preventing weapons from operating effectively, and shutting down financial markets. The recent foreign hacking of Pentagon computers provides a clear example of the cyber threat.

Beale AFB is one of a few bases that are being considered as the permanent headquarters for the Cyber Command. Beale already performs an important cyber function by providing our commanders on the ground with critical intelligence, surveillance, and reconnaissance (ISR) information. Further, the Air Force has expressed an interest in establishing partnerships with

the Information Technology (IT) community and academic institutions to help perform cyber security operations. California is already home to a heavy concentration of defense, computer, and aerospace firms, as well as a number of first rate institutions of higher learning. For these reasons, many believe that Beale has unrivaled attributes for the Cyber Command.

I am working to bring the command, or a component of it, to Beale. But regardless of where the Air Force decides to place the command, there's no question that Beale AFB will continue to perform important cyber security operations in the future.

Road Improvements in North State

In recent years, Northern California has received over three hundred million federal transportation dollars to make much-needed improvements on I-5, Highway 70, Highway 99, and other important roadways throughout the North State. Additional improvements for these and other roadways are scheduled in the coming years. I believe California's Second Congressional District should get its fair share of transportation funding. I will continue to work to help ensure that the federal highways in Northern California are safer and less congested, and that your tax dollars make it back to local communities.

Academy Application Deadline Soon

Each year I have the honor of recommending young men and women for appointment to the U.S. Military Academies. These institutions provide an exceptional experience to train for a career as an officer in our armed forces. This is a tremendous opportunity for a top-notch education for interested and qualified students in Northern California.

Interested young men and women between the ages of 17 and 22 who are residents of California's Second Congressional District and U.S. citizens can apply. The deadline for completing the application is October 31, 2007. Interested students should contact my office at 530-893-8363 or [click here](#).

